

The Game (for Daddy)

by James B. Goode

We got ready early
assembling our glass bottle RCs,
packs of Premium saltine crackers,
and Blue Horse notebook paper
with the stub of a pencil
left over from some sweaty homework assignment
my job was to scratch out the roster
leaving room for field goals and foul shots
and space for the possibilities
of five fouls above each name
reception was never good in the coal camp
I held the white wire oval antenna with one hand,
my body a liquid conduit bringing in the radio waves
while the other shuffled
RC, crackers, and the pencil on the paper
recording every moment
like it was as important as it was
four ears cocked toward the luminous radio dial
waiting,
listening to the ticking toward the verdict
heats thumping like pheasant wings in our chests
sweat breaking out on our foreheads
from the coal stove in the middle of our court
and the game
which most always came down to
the last second
the last shot
the final moment
flying past us
like a freight train
passing a hobo.